

**CLEAN VERSION OF THE PENDING CLAIMS**

1. A hockey stick blade comprising:  
  
a face,  
  
a lower portion, and  
  
an upper portion having a longitudinal axis and comprising a defined region of reduced longitudinal bending stiffness in a direction generally perpendicular to the face of the blade when measured relative to regions in the upper portion that border either side of the defined region along the longitudinal axis.
  
2. A hockey stick comprising:  
  
a shaft and  
  
a blade adapted to being joined to the shaft comprising a face, a lower portion, a heel and an upper portion having a longitudinal axis generally extending from the heel toward the shaft, the upper portion being comprised of a defined region of reduced longitudinal bending stiffness in a direction generally perpendicular to the face of the blade when measured relative to regions in the upper portion of the blade that border either side of the defined region along the longitudinal axis.
  
3. A hockey stick blade comprising:  
  
a face,  
  
a lower portion, and  
  
an upper portion having a longitudinal axis and comprising a defined region having a reduced width dimension in a direction generally perpendicular to the face of the blade when measured

relative to regions in the upper portion that border either side of the defined region along the longitudinal axis.

4. A hockey stick comprising:

a shaft and

a blade adapted to being joined to the shaft comprising a face, a lower portion, a heel and an upper portion having a longitudinal axis generally extending from the heel toward the shaft, the upper portion being comprised of a defined region having a reduced width dimension in a direction generally perpendicular to the face of the blade when measured relative to regions in the upper portion of the blade that border either side of the defined region along the longitudinal axis.

5. (New) A hockey stick comprising:

a shaft, and

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a detachable blade adapted to be received or detachably connected to the shaft comprising a face, a lower portion, a heel, and an upper portion having a longitudinal axis generally extending from the heel toward the shaft, the upper portion comprised of a defined region of reduced longitudinal bending stiffness in a direction generally perpendicular to the face of the blade when measured relative to regions in the upper portion of the blade that border either side of the defined region along the longitudinal axis, the defined region including an outer concave surface on at least one of a front side and a back side of the upper portion.

6. (New) A hockey stick blade comprising:  
a lower portion, and  
an upper portion dimensioned to be detachably mated to a hockey stick shaft, the upper portion including an exterior region having an outer concave surface on at least one of a front side and a back side of the upper portion.

7. (New) The hockey stick blade of claim 6 wherein the upper portion further includes a mating section having a substantially rectangular cross section dimensioned to mate with a hockey stick shaft.

8. (New) The hockey stick blade of claim 7 wherein the outer concave surface is located below the mating section.

9. (New) The hockey stick blade of claim 6, wherein the exterior region includes an outer concave surface on both the front and back sides of the upper portion.

10. (New) The hockey stick blade of claim 7 wherein the upper portion has a longitudinal axis generally extending lengthwise through a midsection of the mating section, wherein the exterior region has a reduced longitudinal bending stiffness in a direction generally perpendicular to the front and back sides of the upper portion of the blade relative to regions in the upper portion of the blade bordering either side of the exterior region along the longitudinal axis.

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11. (New) A hockey stick comprising:

a shaft, and

a blade configured to be detachably mated to the shaft comprising a face, a lower portion, a heel, and an upper portion having a longitudinal axis generally extending from the heel toward the shaft, the upper portion including a defined exterior region with an outer concave surface on at least one of a front side and a back side of the upper portion, the defined region having a reduced longitudinal bending stiffness in a direction generally perpendicular to the face of the blade relative to regions in the upper portion of the blade bordering either side of the defined region along the longitudinal axis.

12. (New) The hockey stick of claim 11 wherein the upper portion further includes a mating section having a substantially rectangular cross section dimensioned to mate with the shaft.

13. (New) The hockey stick blade of claim 12 wherein the defined exterior region is located below the mating section.

14. (New) The hockey stick blade of claim 11, wherein the defined exterior region includes an outer concave surface on both the front and back sides of the upper portion.

15. (New) The hockey stick blade of claim 14, wherein the outer concave surface on the front side of the upper portion has substantially the same dimensions as the outer concave surface on the back side of the upper portion.

A) 16. (New) The hockey stick blade of claim 15, wherein the outer concave surfaces on the front and back sides of the upper portion are directly opposed to one another.

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